

# QUARTERLY NEWS-LETTER

## VOLUME FIFTY

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TO THE YUKON WITH  
JACK LONDON:  
THE KLONDIKE DIARY OF  
FRED THOMPSON

*Part One*

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# To the Yukon with Jack London: The Klondike Diary of Fred Thompson

## PART ONE

Edited with introduction by

DAVID MIKE HAMILTON

### *Introduction*

THE GOLD had always been there, of course. The Indians had discovered it long ago, but, having little use for it, largely ignored it. The Russians found it, too, but were too busy trapping furs to devote any time to taking it. Seasoned sourdoughs had started mining it only a little more than a decade after the California Gold Rush of 1849. For thirty years, with modest success they had panned and dug in the ground in search of it. They carried the news of their work south from time to time. Many a stateside newspaper carried their stories as newsfiller, buried on a back page. Occasionally, a book was written about the Klondike. But still, the Yukon lay largely undisturbed.

The news of the great bonanza came to San Francisco on a hot July day in 1897. The Frenchmen in the city were busy celebrating Bastille Day while the newspaper reporters scratched their heads, trying to put new life into the story of the day: a searing heat wave which already had lasted over a week. A few reporters braved the heat down at the wharf, where the steamer *Excelsior* was in the final docking process. The cargo she carried would alter many of their lives.

July 15th the story of the greatest gold strike ever hit page one of every newspaper in the San Francisco bay area. The *Excelsior's* cargo contained gold! Huge gold nuggets! A few of them were reproduced on the pages of the *Chronicle* to lend authenticity to the almost unbelievable stories of fantastic wealth to be had in the Klondike. Yukon gold became the only topic of conversation, as many of the more adventurous souls ransacked the local merchants in search of goods and food for their outfits. The Klondike gold rush had begun.

The reasons for Fred Thompson's decision to travel to the Yukon were probably no different from those of many others who sailed

north. The brother of the deputy county clerk for Sonoma County, Thompson felt restless. Times were hard, and the promise of great riches was just too enticing to ignore. Nine days after learning of the gold strike, Thompson had assembled an outfit, shipped it to Juneau, and traveled to San Francisco to board the *Umatilla* for the goldfields.

There were several routes to the goldfields. An all-water route was the least strenuous. Those who chose it took passage on steamers to St. Michael, Alaska, located near the mouth of the Yukon River. From there it was a simple matter to board a sternwheeler for the 1,700-mile trip up the Yukon to Dawson City—a trip made difficult by the freeze-up of the river which stranded most for the entire winter, thousands of miles from their destination.

An "All-Canadian Route" was advertised as an alternative to the supposedly more difficult Alaskan routes. Beginning in Edmonton, Alberta, miners traveled via the Peace, Liard, and Pelly Rivers to Dawson City. The 1,700-mile journey proved impossible to most, and fatal to many.

Many of the early prospectors took coastal steamers to Skagway, Alaska, then crossed over the mountains via the White Pass to Lake Bennett. From there they sailed up the Yukon River to Dawson City. This route promised rain and mud, which made a difficult trail impossible, and ice, which prevented navigation to Dawson.

By far the most popular route was the one chosen by Thompson and Jack London. Following the lead of the early prospectors, they secured passage via steamer to Skagway, but then sailed on to Dyea. They selected the steep Chilkoot Pass as the most profitable way to Lake Bennett, and from there, traveled via handmade boat to Dawson City.

Sunday morning, July 25, 1897, was sailing day for the *Umatilla*, and the pier alongside the boat was crowded with eager and excited passengers and well-wishers, as well as tons of baggage. The tiny steamer carried 470 ticket-holding travelers that day—181 more than the ship was permitted by law to carry. The chief concern among the sixty-one miners in the group was to team up—to form a party which could challenge the obstacles of the frozen north. Fred Thompson was well aware of the advantages of partnership, and soon met J. Merrit Sloper, a thin, forty-year-old adventurer who, fresh from travels in South America, could contribute a basic knowledge of carpentry and sailing. Big Jim Goodman also joined the team. A practiced hunter of prodigious strength, Goodman was the only man in the group who had



mining experience. Captain Shepard was an elderly man, in poor health (he had probably suffered a mild heart attack from the excitement of preparing for the trip), but he too was included, mostly because his money had grubstaked another man—a strong-willed sailor with the qualities of leadership which could hold the group together—Jack London.

Thompson himself, slender and sporting a red beard, offered the group a willing spirit and an able hand. Optimistic and inclined to dream, Thompson was a bit pompous and distant in manner, but nevertheless a gentleman. When, many months later, the tired miners had burned and shoveled their way to bedrock and consequent disappointment, it would be Thompson who would refuse to admit defeat: "Our claims are worth a cool quarter of a million," he would say with an air of lofty finality which defied argument. "And we are doing fairly well, all things considered."

Thompson was a meticulous man, and while his diary shows little literary flair, it does provide a faithful record of the events of the journey he made to the Klondike. Even so, it probably would not have survived had not Jack London been along to magnify its historical importance.

Because the historical significance of the diary is paramount, I have presented a clean version of it. The misspelled words, faulty punctuation, and occasional lapses of grammar did not add to the understanding of the events Thompson recorded, and so they have been silently corrected. In addition, titles and numbers have been punctuated uniformly, and abbreviations spelled out. In no case, however, has my emendation altered the meaning of the text.

Thompson clearly was not a storyteller—he was a clerk who recorded the events of a trip to the Klondike as he saw them. Nevertheless his diary captures the excitement and hardship of the journey to the Yukon, and his keen observations and accurate account enrich not only our understanding of the rush for gold, but also the men who made it.

### *The Trip to Dyea*

*Friday, July 23, 1897*, I left Santa Rosa, California, for the goldfields in Alaska. From Santa Rosa I went to San Francisco by train, and on Saturday, July 24th, purchased the greatest portion of my supplies, shipping by boat freight to Juneau, Alaska my provisions, groceries,<sup>1</sup> etc., and carrying with me as baggage my clothing, blankets, etc.

I secured passage on the steamer *Umatilla*, which runs between San Francisco and Seattle via Port Townsend, Washington, and passage from Port Townsend to Juneau on the steamer *City of Topeka*. My ticket was a through ticket from San Francisco to Juneau, being first class on *Umatilla*, and second class on *City of Topeka*. The passage cost \$25.00, including meals and sleeping accommodations.

The *Umatilla* was due to leave San Francisco Sunday, July 25th, at 9:00 a.m., but on account of the immense crowd, and the baggage and freight which were being loaded, did not leave port until 10:40 p.m. After leaving San Francisco and the Golden Gate, our course was northwest and north, keeping ten to fifty miles out from shore. For two days we could see no land, except now and then in the far distance. The ocean was quite rough, and nearly all the passengers on board were very sick from the time we got outside the Golden Gate until early Wednesday morning, when we struck smooth water after rounding Cape Flattery, and entered the Sound. Here the Sound was quite wide.<sup>2</sup> For most of the distance from the mouth of the Sound to Victoria, though, we were in sight of land, and within a short distance of either the north or south shore.

We arrived at Victoria, Vancouver Island, at 1:00 p.m., and remained until 5:00 p.m. This gave us a chance to take in the town. Victoria is a very nice British city of about fifty or sixty thousand, and I should judge very prosperous. At 5:00 p.m. we left Victoria for Port Townsend, and arrived at that point at 9:00 p.m. On account of a big load of freight, and the many passengers en route to Juneau, the steamer *City of Topeka* was way behind time, and did not arrive until 11:15 p.m. Before leaving, she had to load up all the freight and baggage left by the *Umatilla* for the Gold Country. As soon as the steamer arrived she began loading, and did not finish until 11:00 a.m. Thursday.

At 11:30 we were off for Juneau. Our first stop was Victoria. We arrived at that port at 3:35 p.m., and left at 5:00 p.m. Our course was nearly north, up the straits, channels, and narrows, and between many islands. It was the most beautiful trip one can imagine. At the north part of Vancouver Island, we came out into the ocean—Queen Charlotte Sound—making a run of about fifty miles in the ocean. After this our course was north and northwest to Juneau, between islands and beautiful scenery.

*August 2-4.* Arrived at Juneau Monday evening. Remained here Tuesday and Wednesday. Rained all the time.

*August 5.* Left Juneau at 11:00 a.m. for Dyea, with Indians and canoes.



*August 6.* Still on our way to Dyea.

*August 7.* Arrived at Dyea at 3:30 p.m. The steamer *Elder* is here being unloaded.

*Through the Chilkoot Pass*

*August 8.* Stayed in camp all day, and purchased a boat for \$10.00 to carry our supplies to head of navigation, six miles up from Dyea.<sup>3</sup>

*August 9-11.* Took boatloads (three) of our goods to head of navigation.

*August 12.* Began to pack our goods on our backs up the trail, making our cache one mile further up the river.

*August 13.* Eight miles from Dyea—very warm. Creek raised several feet. Sent three thousand pounds by Indian train to the summit (fourteen miles), paying twenty-two cents per pound.<sup>4</sup>

*August 14.* This morning was very hot, and the road was rough. We are now nine miles from Dyea. Heard *Mexico* steamer sank.<sup>5</sup> The *Willamette* is at Skagway. Mr. Shepard left us today for his home at Oakland, California; his rheumatism got very bad.<sup>6</sup>

*August 15.* Very warm today—did not do much. Met Tarwater of Santa Rosa—took him as passenger, exchanging board and passage for his work.<sup>7</sup>

*August 16.* Started on the hill this morning from head of Dyea Canyon, and find her a rough proposition. All are feeling fair, but get very tired and footsore.

*August 17.* Moved about three-quarters of a mile today. Just got breakfast and fixed up my pack for a start.

*August 18.* Got breakfast. Cooked mush, fried bacon, and made hot rolls and coffee, and have my pack (which is ninety-eight pounds of beans) ready for a start. I find that since Mr. Shepard left us I must do the cooking, but do not like the job. Would rather pack on my back.

*August 19.* Was at summit yesterday. It is raining now, but still we have to keep on the move. Have had a very muddy road today, and we are all very tired.

*August 20.* We are now at Pleasant Camp,<sup>8</sup> three miles from Sheep Camp. It is raining this morning, but still we go. Crossed the Dyea River three times on logs, one tied across the other. They are very hard to walk on, with the water rushing underneath and one hundred pounds on your back, but we are over them now, and I think we will be at Sheep Camp tomorrow.

*August 21.* Got our stuff to Sheep Camp<sup>9</sup> today, and made a start for

Stone House two miles up from Sheep Camp. Stone House is the name given by the Indians to a large stone that has a cave inside. The stone somewhat resembles a house, and affords a stopping place and shelter from the terrible storms in this vicinity. Sheep Camp is a very tough hold, so we camped above it about three hundred yards.

*August 22.* Worked all forenoon, and as we were very tired and the day was warm, got dinner early and laid up during the afternoon. We all took a snooze, and Mr. Tarwater mended our shoes.

*August 23.* Rain, and oh, the mud! Moved quite a distance above Sheep Camp. Trail is very bad, and we are getting up pretty close to snow. It is quite cold tonight.

*August 24.* Rain most of the night. Boys don't feel much like packing, but must keep moving. Made three trips, and stayed home balance of the day. It looks very much like a big storm.

*August 25.* Rain most of the night, and it is raining this morning, but moved to Stone House.

*August 26.* Rain all night and day. Done nothing.

*August 27.* Rain. Made two trips to Scales<sup>10</sup> below summit.

*August 28-29.* Made five trips to summit.

*August 30.* Rain and wind. Summit very bad. Made two trips and moved our camp to foot of summit. We camped on the cold rocks, with ice-cold water running underneath, gathering what brush and moss we could find to spread on the rocky floor in our tent. Then ate our scanty supper (and since we had to pack our wood two miles, we had barely enough to get breakfast), spread our blankets, and tried to get some sleep while laying on the soft side of many sharp stones.

#### *To the Yukon River*

*August 31.* Got our goods all over the summit and across the snow to Crater Lake,<sup>11</sup> where we hired a boat for \$30.00 to take our goods the three miles across the lake.

*September 1.* Moved most of our goods on our sled across the snow to Happy Camp.<sup>12</sup>

*September 2.* Finished moving our goods to Happy Camp.

*September 3.* Started to move our goods to Long Lake. Rain and occasional flurries of snow. Weather and trail disagreeable.

*September 4-5.* Still moving to Long Lake.

*September 6.* Got our goods all moved to Long Lake, and hired a boat to take them across, paying \$30.00. Packed most of the goods three hundred yards to the shore of Deep Lake, where we pitched camp.



*September 7.* Finished moving our goods from Long Lake to Deep Lake, and hired a boat, paying \$8.00. After night, took our goods across the lake. Also took across the goods of another party, for which we received \$4.00.

*September 8.* Moved to Lake Lindeman.<sup>13</sup>

*September 9.* Merrit Sloper and Jack London have gone up the river with Bill, Dave, and Jud to buy lumber for boats.<sup>14</sup> Tarwater and I finished packing our goods from Deep Lake to Lake Lindeman.

*September 10.* This morning, took pack on my back to the woods up river five miles, where the boys were getting out logs and sawing lumber to build our boats. They found some good trees. Got dinner for them, and will go up with more grub for them day after tomorrow.

*September 11.* Hung out bacon and spread fruit on canvas to dry. It is quite showery and snowy in the mountains. Rained most all night.

*September 12.* Went to woods with pack. Got dinner for the boys. Rain most all day. River very high.

*September 13.* Stayed at home, invoiced our goods, and tried to get them straightened out as best I could after the misuse they have had on the trail. Charles Rand (who is building the boats with us) went to the woods today.

*September 14.* Went to woods with pack, carrying bread, beans, and bacon. Sunshine all day. When I got back, took supper with Charles Rand and Mrs. Hirschburg. (She is a passenger with the crowd that is helping us build the boats.) We had mossberry pie, which tasted very good.

*September 15.* Stayed at home today, and packed over some sacks of our provisions which had gotten in bad shape. Charles went to the woods.

*September 16.* Very windy today—some rain. Went to woods with pack, and got dinner for the boys. One boat finished.

*September 17.* Stayed at home today—did very little. Charles went to the woods. One boat put in the river and used as a ferry, as the river raised very high and carried away the bridge we had made.

*September 18.* Went to camp in woods with Charles to help bring the boats down river, but as they were not ready, will try it again tomorrow. The river is very swift and crooked.

*September 19.* Went to woods and brought boats down. Had quite a hard time lining them down for about two miles, after which we all got in and turned the boat loose, with Jack at her stern, Sloper at her bow, and Jim and myself at the oars. We had a very lively ride down

the river and into Lindeman. River very crooked and swift. Had a splendid supper waiting for us, cooked by Mrs. Hirschburg.

*September 20.* Went out and cut four oars, and the boys started to make them up. Jack cut out the sails and rigged the boom and mast, and we all sewed on the sail until 12:00 at night. We named our boats *Belle of Yukon* and *Yukon Belle*, and painted the names in large black letters with charcoal on the stern, and also on each side of the bow.

*September 21.* Sailed from Lake Lindeman at 12:00 noon, and got to portage at Lake Bennett at 1:00 p.m. Had our dinner, got one boat over portage and our goods packed to Bennett, for which we paid \$27.50 each.<sup>15</sup> Made our camp on island at Bennett. Weather very cold. At the point where the Skagway trail comes in, and all along the hillside up from Bennett, there are hundreds of dead horses that have been used on the Skagway trail and here have played out—died for want of food, bad usage, or shot after no more use could be got from them. Parties coming off the Skagway trail tell me there are enough dead horses and mules along the trail to lay them side by side, so that one can walk on horse flesh the entire length (fifty miles). Dyea trail is bad enough, but can't hold a candle to the Skagway.<sup>16</sup>

*September 22.* Got other boat over portage and down to camp before breakfast. Everything loaded, we sailed down Bennett with a very fair wind which made our boats hum—passed everything in sight. Wind was fair and very strong all day, and waves were three or four feet high, making our boats hard to steer, but we went flying, and camped about 5:00 p.m. on the shores of Lake Tagish. A good many boats swamped on Lake Bennett.

*September 23.* Sailed from Lake Tagish to Lake Marsh. Had a hard time passing Windy Arm.<sup>17</sup> Got to Custom House at foot of Tagish where we had to pay duty, but by scheming, got off paying only \$21.50 on our outfit.<sup>18</sup> Others that were not onto their job had to pay much more. Parties that did not have the money had their goods confiscated by the officers. Winds fair most of the day. Passed everything in sight, and camped on the shores of Lake Marsh. Here a good many miners, going in over the ice in the spring, abandon their sleds and begin to build their boats. The timber at this point is very good.

### *A Dangerous Voyage*

*September 24.* Sailed from Lake Marsh to the Lewis River.<sup>19</sup> Arrived at the river about noon, cooked our dinner on the boat, and drifted and rowed down the river, having a very pleasant afternoon. Found



good camp for the night on the riverbank. Jim shot two pheasants (grouse).

*September 25.* Up bright and early. Snowing and cold. Started down the river again; got very cold, so went ashore and built a fire. Got warm and had something to eat. Jim went out to try and shoot a moose, but saw nothing. Started down river again. Snowing stopped. Came to Box Canyon, which we shot (after taking a look at it) with everything in our boat: Jack at stern, Sloper at bow, Jim and myself at the oars. The ride was a swift one, as the river at this point narrows to about thirty feet, and the water dashes and rolls through the narrow box (which has walls from fifty to one hundred feet high) at great speed, making it rather dangerous to enter. But as our boat was large and strong, we did not feel alarmed to make the run. As it was, we made the run in three minutes. Otherwise, it would have taken us four days to pack around.<sup>20</sup> After getting through, Jack and Sloper went back and ran Mr. and Mrs. Ret in safety. Pitched camp below White Horse, had our supper, and went to bed with our minds easy.

*September 26.* Broke camp and went down the river to Lake LaBerge. Here we found a north wind blowing, so we camped for the night.

*September 27.* North wind still blowing. Will not start out today.

*September 28.* North wind still blowing. Done nothing all day but laid in camp. Jim went out to try and get a bear, but only shot a pheasant. Snowing quite hard. Scores of boats are lined up along the bank. More arriving all the time.

*September 29.* Broke camp early. Wind still north, but not as strong. Blinding snowstorm on lake for about one hour.<sup>21</sup> Rowed all day, got dinner on boat, and pulled into a very nice harbor for camp at night.

*September 30.* Got up very early and made a start, but as we rounded a point, struck a very heavy sea and a hard storm. Finding that we could not make any headway, we pulled into a little cover under a rock for shelter. Here we remained nearly all day in a blinding snowstorm.

At 4:00 p.m. we pulled about one mile further, and found another harbor where we pulled in and camped. At this point we found several boats laid up. Our boats have made a great record, and are known by everyone coming in.

After getting settled in camp, Charles Rand, who is a little poetically inclined, wrote the following poem about today's events:

On the 30th day of September  
On the shores of Lake Le Barge

*The Book Club of California*

The northern winds were blowing  
And the waves were rolling large.  
We started in the morning  
And wanted to cross the lake  
But we found on leaving harbor  
We had made a great mistake.  
And so we pulled along the shore  
And looked for a sheltered nook.  
You bet the first we came to  
That's the one we took.  
We waited there the whole day long  
And looked out on the lake,  
Some told funny stories  
And some bewailed their fate.  
The snow it still kept falling  
And the wind it did not drop,  
Weather or no, we had to go,  
And find a place to stop.  
We knew our boats were worthy  
And could stand an awful swell  
For one was named *Belle of Yukon*  
And the other *Yukon Belle*  
And so we launched them off  
And pulled along the shore,  
Pulled for all was in us  
As we'd never done before.  
We had not long to work this way  
And were glad of it too  
For rounding a hill of rocks  
A harbor came in view.  
With Dave and Bill, Judd and myself  
Mrs. Hirschburg at the helm  
We soon were out of danger  
In waters mild and calm.  
Here we cleared the snow away  
Put up the tents in a group  
The cook she put the kettle on  
And then we had bean soup.

*"The Klondike Diary of Fred Thompson" will be continued in our next issue.*



## NOTES

1. Canadian regulations required that miners carry with them enough food to last an entire year. The weight of these groceries usually approached two thousand pounds.

2. Although he confuses it with Puget Sound, Thompson is actually referring here to the Straits of Juan de Fuca, which separate Vancouver Island from Washington's Olympic Peninsula.

3. Despite being very narrow and shallow, Dyea Inlet could be navigated. In order to avoid the extra work of loading and unloading canoes for several days, however, most miners used pack-horses to carry their outfits, and hiked up the steep Healy Trail to Pleasant Camp.

4. The Tlingit, Chilkoot, Stikine, and Chilkat Indian tribes went to work as packers during the gold rush, and profited handsomely from their efforts. At the beginning of the rush, they charged eight cents per pound to pack goods to the summit. By 1898 they were charging fifty cents per pound to carry outfits to the Scales, and \$1.00 per pound to carry goods over the summit.

5. The Pacific Steamship Company's steamer *Mexico* struck a rock while navigating in dense fog through the Diancon entrance to Dyea Inlet. The boat sank in two hundred feet of water two hours after the collision. All seventy-five passengers were rescued.

6. Mr. Shepard was totally unfit for the rigors of the journey and everyone (including Jack London) was relieved when he decided to go home.

7. Old Man Tarwater gambled that he could slip through Canadian customs without the required year's supply of food. Fortunately, he was successful. Jack London later wrote about him in "Like Argus of Ancient Times."

8. Pleasant Camp consisted of a three-mile strip of woods that afforded some slight shelter from the elements. It also provided some relief to eyes weary of looking at the rocky trail which passed through the gorge below.

9. Sheep Camp was the final point on the trail where the travelers could cut timber. Situated in a valley about a half mile wide, it was so named because it had once served as a headquarters for hunters seeking mountain sheep. By the height of the gold rush, it had become a haven for gamblers and con men.

10. So-called because the trail became a thirty-five-degree climb, forcing men to literally "scale" up the mountain, the Scales marked the place where outfits were weighed (or reweighed), and packer's rates climbed to \$1.00 a pound.

11. Crater Lake was the first of a series of three lakes which formed a downhill trail to Lake Lindeman. The other lakes were Long Lake and Deep Lake.

12. Relieved after the strenuous climb, the miners found this wooded shelter quite pleasant. Here they could again warm themselves by a fire.

13. Six-mile-long Lake Lindeman marked the beginning of the water voyage to Dawson.
14. Lumber was quite scarce. Forest fires and Indian campfires had taken their toll of the woods. What lumber that was left consisted mostly of white spruce.
15. Lake Bennett is joined to Lake Lindeman by a mile-long river. Because of the twisted path of this stream, and the many large rocks scattered in its bed, most miners chose to carry their outfits overland to Lake Bennett.
16. Skagway trail was soon known as the "Dead Horse Trail" and avoided by most miners.
17. Part of Lake Tagish. Taku was the name given to the other "arm" of this lake.
18. Although the Canadians legally were allowed to exact duty on every part of a miner's outfit, they generally charged duty only on articles imported for commercial purposes such as mining tools and machinery. The Customs House was later moved to the summit, when the United States and Canada began quarreling over the international border.
19. The Lewis River is now considered part of the Klondike River.
20. Also known as Miles Canyon and Whitehorse Rapids, this section of the journey proved to be the most dangerous. Jack London wrote about shooting these rapids in an article published in *The Home Magazine*. Entitled "Through the Rapids on the Way to the Klondike," the article was published in June, 1899.
21. Lake LaBerge was famous for its consistently foul weather.



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DAVID MIKE HAMILTON is President of The Live Oak Press in Palo Alto. His book, *The Tools of My Trade*, concerning Jack London's library, is to be published by the University of Washington Press. The article was first published as a keepsake for the Zamorano Club of Los Angeles in 1980.



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## *Book Review*

*Nicholas Kis: A Hungarian punch-cutter and printer 1650-1702*, by György Haiman. Translated by Elizabeth Hoch, Mária Baranyai and Sándor Bándy. Bibliography compiled by Elizabeth Soltész. 450pp. Jack W. Stauffacher/The Greenwood Press, in association with Gilman D. Parsons, Books, 38 Hill Point, San Francisco, California 94117.

The beauty and some of the mystery of the so-called Janson types were revealed most exquisitely by Jack Stauffacher in his book, *Janson: A Definitive Collection* printed by him in 1954. Now his enthusiasm has made available, through co-publication, an astonishing work of typographic sleuthing and scholarship about the true creator of these types, Nicholas Kis. Through countless reproductions, facsimiles, and fold-out enclosures there are displayed and discussed every size and variant of the characters created by Nicholas Kis but attributed to Anton Janson. There are full-color reproductions of the bindings of the most notable books printed by him, some in Amsterdam and others in Hungary.

For connoisseurs of typography György Haiman's meticulous comparison of letterforms is a delight. The story of how, at thirty, Kis left Hungary for Amsterdam, there to succeed in learning printing to the extent of producing a Protestant Bible is surprising enough. That he also learned punch cutting, type casting, and all the skills needed to set up a typefoundry is amazing. In Haiman's book is represented a full-scale facsimile specimen of the typefaces created by Kis in Holland. He had the artistic eye for designing letterforms with what Joseph Moxon, a contemporary, called a "commoditious fatness" which "renders them more legible." His expertise is demonstrated by their general acceptance today as among the best faces for fine printing.

In Holland he printed, after the Bible, two Psalters and a separate New Testament. In 1689 he returned to his homeland, leaving much of his material behind. But he resumed his printing in Hungary to accomplish an impressive output. His bibliography includes more than a hundred items, among which is the first Hungarian *Americanum*, his own translation of a work by Increase Mather.

György Haiman's book has been published simultaneously in Budapest. The scholarship and intelligence shown in the revelation of the career and creativity of one of the highly important contributors to the seventeenth-century book is a splendid achievement. The life and the type designs of Nicholas Kis are inspiring to those interested in the arts of the book as is György Haiman's excellent study of them. *Adrian Wilson*

## *Gifts & Acquisitions*

Quite a while ago (too long ago!) we asked Duncan Olmsted for a typical example of his fine binding for the Club's collection of member bindings. He very happily allowed that we could have his binding of Nash's production of Stevenson's *Silverado Squatters* IF we would give him a copy of the original edition. We agreed, and promptly forgot—but not our conscience and library helper, Barbara Land, who remembered and tried at regular intervals to find a good copy. Her efforts have finally met with success; and more—she bought and paid for the near perfect copy (with prospectus laid in) which is now being presented to Duncan with the Club's compliments, as a gift to the Club from Barbara. Many, many thanks, dear Barbara.

We are most grateful to Mr. Thomas Rae of The Black Pennell Press, 36 Margaret Street, Greenock, Scotland, PA16 8EA, for sending the Club three more of his well-made books. Of particular interest to our members, since we have just produced a book about Thomas Bewick, is *Waiting for Death*, 1982, Number 237 of 250 copies. This features an offset litho print of Bewick's large unfinished engraving of that name depicting an old and neglected



horse which Bewick conceived to illustrate a short fable on the humane treatment of worn-out horses. The completed print was to have been dedicated to the SPCA. This handsome book was printed by hand and bound by Mr. Rae in gray wrappers. The second book is *Songs of the Press*, and other poems relative to the art of printing, 1983, number 103 of 120 copies. It is a delightful slim volume printed in two colors on Van Gelder mould-made, hand-fed on a "stripped down" Thompson platen press and bound in blind-stamped red paper boards. The third book is *The Death of Mary Queen of Scots* taken from the 1725 English translation from the French done by James Freebairn and printed in Scotland. This portion printed by Mr. Rae in 1984 is number 70 of 100 copies, set in distinctive American Uncial and printed in two colors on dampened handmade Chester light-toned laid paper. It is bound in paper imitation vellum boards. We are very pleased to have them—many thanks.

D. Steven Corey

Member Jeff Dykes very kindly presented The Club with an inscribed copy of *My Dobie Collection*, Keepsake No. 1, prepared for the Friends of the Texas A & M Library and printed at the University Press. It lists several hundred items by and about J. Frank "Pancho" Dobie and is a most interesting bibliography not only because of Jeff's intimate knowledge of the books he collected but also because of his long association with Dobie, as a collector and friend. Both men were interested in the range cattle industry and the Southwest and it was only natural that they would gravitate to each other.

Dykes, an alumnus of Texas A&M University, is a former Assistant Director of the United States Soil Conservation Service, in the Department of Agriculture, who started collecting many years ago and upon his retirement, entered the book-selling field, specializing in books concerning the range. Early on, because of his daughter's interest in Dobie-related material, it was thought the collection would be hers. However, upon the death of Dobie, Martha Dykes Goldsmith agreed with her father that the collection should go to the library of his alma mater, hence Keepsake No. 1.

Fifty of the titles listed are classified as "rare," "exceedingly rare," and "very scarce to rare." Then there follows a list of pamphlets, broadsides, and newspaper articles, together with a list of books for which Dobie had written the preface or foreword, and magazine stories and articles.

This is a bibliography that belongs on the book shelves of everyone interested in the range cattle industry, Texas, and the Southwest.

Michael Harrison

The Club has received the second and final volume of the monumental *Life Work of Dard Hunter*. This exhilarating and opulent book follows the design and exquisite printing of volume one, and, as was the first, was compiled by his son, Dard Hunter II. The two volumes are a fitting tribute to one of

America's great graphic artists. Dard Hunter was not only a great paper maker and historian and creator of the famous Dard Hunter Paper Museum, he was an artist in stained glass, among other things, and printer/type designer. Each of the two volumes has the same limited copy number (number 37) of 150 copies. It is virtually impossible to describe this book—as was the case with the first volume—one must see them and thumb them to appreciate their rare quality and the superb effort made in their manufacture.

The Club has just acquired a copy for the reference collection of *Paper and Light*, the Calotype process in France and Great Britain, 1839-1870. Calotype is a nineteenth-century photographic system by which an unlimited number of positive prints could be produced from a single paper negative. This process allowed printers to mount in actual photographs. Although Talbot in England invented this process, France improved on it.

The Club has acquired another important book for the reference collection: *A History of Way & Williams* by Joe W. Kraus, George S. Mac Manus Co., Philadelphia, 1984. In three short years (1895-1898) Way & Williams' firm made a great impact on American printing and publishing. The firm commissioned the Kelmscott Press to print Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *Hand & Soul*, 1896—the only imprint William Morris allowed for an American publisher. This copy will be housed with Kraus' companion volume on the rival Boston Publisher, Copeland & Day, which we acquired last year.

Reading of our recent W. A. Dwiggins show, Mr. Joseph P. Fraczkoski has sent the Club a copy of a descriptive piece on his outstanding Dwiggins collection, which was on display at the Library Gallery, Delaware Art Museum at Wilmington from August to October 1981. The Club is delighted to include this pamphlet and catalogue with our own fine Dwiggins collection.

Carolyn and James Robertson of the Yolla Bolly Press have presented to the Club copies of their latest works, the second and third of their four-book series "California Writers of the Land." *Flight* by John Steinbeck has a foreword by Wallace Stegner and six notable engravings by Karin Wilkström printed from the original blocks and over-printed in multicolor lithography. An extraordinary combination of Western talent: Steinbeck and Wallace Stegner, America's most respected novelist and essayist; a printer *par excellence* and a newly discovered California artist, Ms. Wilkström, makes this an incredible collaboration. Art Siedenbaum in the *Los Angeles Times* writes: "I love the feel of a handmade product with its weight and its own demand for preservation." The book is housed in a full Dutch linen case, overprinted with a design by the artist, and it is contained in a stout slipcase. This is surely one of the "Fifty Books of the Year" in our opinion.

William Saroyan's great first book, *The Daring Young Man on the Flying*



*Trapeze*, is a smaller book in format than the others in this series (Robinson Jeffers' *Cawdor* and the afore-mentioned John Steinbeck's *Flight*) but the Robertsons have made this book just as exciting and as typical of their fine craftsmanship. The book is cased in full cloth, stamped in gold leaf and housed in a stout slipcase. The Robertsons chose William Prochnow, a much-exhibited fine graphic artist, to illustrate this important book with woodcuts printed in black, plus an added second color for each. This is an extremely handsome book.

Our sincere thanks to the Robertsons for these noble books, which will become part of our ever growing collection of California Fine Printers. Copies may be had through most fine dealers, or direct from the printer-publishers, Main Street, Covelo, California 95428.

The Club has just acquired for our reference collection Anthony Dyson's *Pictures to Print* (London: Farrand Press, 1984), "the nineteenth-century engraving trade." This is an important source on the methods, equipment, people, and firms that produced the remarkable black-and-white versions of popular paintings, chronicling a remarkable period in the history of art reproduction. The book is a crown quarto of 250 pages, reproducing 95 illustrations, and was designed in a very straightforward manner at the Reading University Department of Typography and Graphic Communications. It is casebound in full cloth and printed rather well on a semi-gloss paper. Dr. Anthony Dyson is a well-known historian on printing and an authority on nineteenth-century British art. He writes lucidly on engraving, printing, and various techniques of both, as well as paper, ink and equipment. This is, we believe, an indispensable work for historians and an important reference for collectors of prints—a "must" for any reference library.

And while on the subject, but more up to date, the Club has acquired the 1925 edition of *Pour L'Imprimeur et le Bibliophile—Les Arts de Reproduction Graphiques*. This outstanding journal was published annually and it reproduces examples of the then new and modern methods of letterpress, lithography, gravure, and monotone methods which anticipate the remarkable color methods that French printing craftsmen introduced to the world. And with these examples of their reproductive arts, the first 107 pages capsule the history of typography, lithography, photolithography, gravure, photo-engraving, phototype (!), heliogravure, rotogravure, engraving(s), paper and papermaking—a comprehensive history of the reproductive arts to 1925. This is an excellent addition to our reference library.

The Club has received a copy from the Contre Coup Press (member Timothy Hawley) of possibly his most ambitious work, *Mrs. Ira Gale Tompkins' Journal*, "the Record of Events, Dec. 1874—April 1877." This is a very well

printed private press book and it is handsomely cased in a marbled paper produced for the press by James R. Reed.

The Club has also acquired a catalogue of *The Rampant Lions Press . . . A printing workshop through five decades*, printed and published by the Press in Cambridge, England on the occasion of an exhibition of their work at the Fitzwilliam Museum, 11 May-27 June, 1982. This excellent review of a notable printing house has an introduction by Brooke Crutchley, former printer of the Cambridge University Press and now a Director of the Fitzwilliam. The catalogue rightly includes all the various type designs, slate and marble engraving, and a complete bibliographical listing of their books and records the unusual acquisition of some famous typefaces. The Press owns the famous Golden Cockerel typeface that was designed by Eric Gill, a recasting of William Morris' Troy typeface for the Press's edition of *The Story of Cupid & Psyche*, three sizes of the Hunt typeface created by Hermann Zapf, and Frederic Warde's original Arrighi that was made for the Metropolitan Museum and cast for the Press, as was the Tory type, by the Oxford University Press. Also included are examples of jacket designs commissioned by various English publishers. This is a "must" book for any collector of fine printing and our only regret is that it is bound in wrappers and not cased.

Another interesting purchase for the Club's library is *Slave to Beauty* by Estelle Jussim which deals with the life of F. (Fred) Holland Day, the principal "actor" in the famous publishing house of Copeland & Day, Boston, 1893-1899. The brief treatment which the press receives in this biography in no way replaces the complete one-volume work by Joe W. Kraus that was written in 1979. Our edition is perhaps more intimate and details the "why" that established Copeland & Day as the foremost fine publisher in America in its time. Day was, at that time, a noted art photographer and a close associate of Edward Steichen, with whom he exhibited prints in every salon in America as well as on the Continent. Day came upon printing with his meeting at Kelmscott with William Morris from whom he purchased the Chaucer and the vellum edition of Keats. And with this introduction and purchase came the birth of the most famous of America's fine publishing house. (Herbert Copeland, Day's partner, was a businessman only; it was Day who was responsible for the design, the selection of famous artists and, for the most part, for selection of the literary work.) Godine published this handsome book and it is well illustrated with examples of Day's incredible photographs as well as the books for which he was responsible. This new work (1981) will be housed with Kraus' complete bibliography.

We appreciate receiving from member George H. Cabaniss, Jr. a copy of Albert Shumate's *The Life of George Henry Goddard* (University of Cali-



fornia, 1969), number seventeen in the series of keepsakes issued by The Friends of The Bancroft Library.

Our thanks to Msgr. Francis J. Weber for providing The Club with copies of two more volumes in his series on the California missions: *Holy Cross Mission*, a documentary history of Santa Cruz, and *Father of the Missions*, which documents the history of San Carlos Borromeo, and also *California's Catholic Treasury*, which describes in essay form a sampling of the artifacts on display in the Historical Museum at the San Fernando Mission Archival Center. We are also indebted to Msgr. Weber for another miniature book, *The Cable Cars*, printed by the Junipero Serra Press, San Fernando, 1984.

The Club has purchased *Printmaking & Picture Printing . . . A Bibliographical Guide to Artistic & Industrial Techniques in Britain, 1750-1900* by Gavin Bridson and Geoffrey Wakeman, Oxford and Williamsburg, 1984. This is a very important index for printing techniques and of the processes involved, i.e. color printing, inks, engraving (all methods), stereotyping and electrotyping, lithography, photoengraving, etc. Unhappily, this 250-page book has been reproduced from a typewriter but its reference value as the first major attempt at describing and making clear the various byways of printing techniques and picture printing makes it a valued tool in any library on printing. Happily, the publishers have done a decent job in case binding and covered it with an attractive printed wrapper.

We have acquired two important reference works for our library. The more important of the two is *The Art of Engraving, with the Various Modes of Operation* by T. H. Fielding, London, 1844. Ours is not the first edition (1841—briefly noted by Bigmore & Wyman) but it appears to include all of the various processes, with an essay on each and an original engraved or printed example of ten of the methods described. Described in detail are etching, soft-ground etching, line engraving, chalk and stipple, aquatint, mezzotint, lithography, wood engraving, metal engraving, electrography (electrotyping), and photography (the last three of these are not illustrated with examples). Our copy is in fair condition in its original blind-stamped red cloth covers with gold-stamped spine.

The second acquisition is *Chromolithography, 1840-1900: The Democratic Art, Pictures for a 19th Century America*, by Peter Marzio, published by Godine in 1979. This is a large, 358-page book and it is an excellent index on lithography as a popular art form in America, including sections on black and white lithography and a 68-page full-color section on chromolithography, plus a set of seven progressive color proofs from Prang's reproduction of a painting by Alfred Thompson Bricker, Boston, 1869. This

is the best book we have seen on the subject, briefly outlining its invention by Senefelder, Englemann's patent (for which he coined the term *chromolithographie*) in 1837, and its use in America up to 1900.

Our thanks to member Edmund E. Simpson for presenting the Club with another of his remarkable linoleum block prints. This one, number thirty-three of seventy-five printed at his Blackwood Press, depicts the Western Red Bud. In addition, we also have Fuchsia (number twenty-five of sixty-eight), and thanks again to Dr. Simpson!

We have received a most curious example of American color photoengraving from member Gale Herrick. It is Volume I, Number 1 (January 1897) of "Birds Illustrated by Color Photography," a magazine published by the Nature Study Publishing Company, Chicago. The title page carries the date 1896 and this unusual example of letterpress color photoengraving appears to us if not a "first," surely an early example. If any member has information on the production of this magazine, we would appreciate learning it. Our thanks to Gale Herrick, who has always been a regular and generous donor to the Club's library.

Another most welcome group of five "Phoenix Broadsheets" has arrived from Toni Savage's private press in Leicester, England. The Phoenix Broadsheets now number 255! One of these five was written by member Colin Franklin, a poem called *Clock*. Many thanks to dear Toni, surely our most consistent—and generous—donor.

*Albert Sperisen*

The Club has acquired a copy of *The Book Beautiful and the Binding as Art*, a catalogue of one of the finest collections of *livres d'artistes*. The collection is offered for sale by John F. Fleming, New York, and Priscilla Juvelis, Boston. *Livres d'artistes* are books illustrated with original graphics by the great masters of the twentieth century, and many of the books in this collection are in bindings specially commissioned from the finest craftsmen in the field, notably Paul Bonet. The catalogue is lavishly illustrated in color with reproductions of forty-five graphics and thirty-seven bindings. Among the artists whose graphics are reproduced are: Pierre Bonnard, Georges Braque, Paul Cezanne, Marc Chagall, Edgar Degas, Andre Derain, Raoul Dufy, Aristide Maillol, Henri Matisse, Joan Miro, Pablo Picasso, Pierre Auguste Renoir, Georges Rouault, and F.-L. Schmied. Bindings of the following binders are reproduced: Rose Adler, Paul Bonet, Georges Crette, Creuzevault, Rene Kieffer, Jacques-Anthoine Legrain, and Semet et Plumelle. This catalogue is an excellent addition to the Club's collections of the Book Beautiful and fine bindings.

*Duncan H. Olmsted*



Many thanks to member A. T. Bolton of Australia for his kind donation to the Club.

During their visit to the Bay Area last fall, John and Rosalind Randle presented to the Club a most attractive broadside, printed by them and giving a short history of their Whittington Press. The Press was founded in 1971 and has produced some sixty books, "Belles Lettres," finely illustrated. Printed in two colors on Amatruda handmade paper using Monotype Garamond, the 24 x 16 inch broadside is graced with a signed wood engraving by Miriam Macgregor. To John and Rosalind at The Whittington Press, Gloucestershire, England, many thanks!

Jim Linden

That perpetual surprise, *Private Press Books* (1979) has at last turned up. Full of useful information about private presses done in the usual good style and taste one has come to expect from them, it is available (and very much recommended)—\$18, or \$10 to Private Libraries Association members.

Barbara Land

## Publications Available

Copies of the following are still available and members are invited to telephone or write the Club to place orders.

*Dan De Quille of the Big Bonanza*. Tamal Land Press, 1980. \$35.00.

*BR. A Panel Discussion at the Bruce Rogers Centenary . . .* by Harry Duncan, K. K. Merker and Ward Ritchie. Richard Hoffman, 1981. \$20.00.

*A Trumpet of Our Own*. Selections from the Writings of the Noted Cherokee Author John Rollin Ridge. Black Stone Press, 1981. \$42.50.

*Paul Landacre*. The Castle Press, 1982. \$22.50.

*Vignettes of Early California*. Patrick Reagh, 1982. \$35.00.

*Edward Vischer's Drawings of the California Missions 1861-1878*. Arion Press, 1982. \$150.

*At the Sign of the Lark*. Harold Berliner, 1983. \$30.00.

*Redwood and Lumbering in California Forests*. The Yolla Bolly Press, 1983. \$80.00.

*Thomas Bewick & The Fables of Aesop*. Designed by Jack Werner Stauffacher and printed by the Cloister Press, 1983. \$75.00.

*Benjamin C. Truman California Booster & Bon Vivant*. Designed and printed by Sherwood Grover at The Grace Hoper Press, 1984. \$27.50.

Prospectuses available upon request. Members who wish to send payment with orders, please note: California residents add six percent tax; residents of Alameda, Contra Costa, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Mateo Counties, and of Santa Clara County and Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit Districts, add six and one-half percent tax.

## *Serendipity*

Our members will be glad to learn that Oscar Lewis was the subject of an article by Kevin Starr ("The World of Oscar Lewis—an appreciative salute to the revered patriarch of California writer-historians") in the recent issue of the California Historical Society's *California History*. *Albert Shumate*

Book Club members may be interested to note that Annual Meetings will now be held in October each year, to conform with our new fiscal year. Announcement of the October 1985 Annual Meeting will follow in due course.

Executive Director Joanie Redington, now Mrs. Harry Morgan, has left the Club to be free to travel with her new husband. They have trips planned to Europe, New Zealand, and Japan, and we wish them bon voyage and much happiness. Shirley Sheffield's cousin, Jay W. Sheffield, has assumed Joanie's position here at the Club.

A very handsome poster depicting Father Junipero Serra ringing a bell calling the Indians to come forth was designed by Leo Politi for the Serra Bicentennial Commission. Now a special limited edition of the poster is available. It is printed on special museum quality paper in a limited edition of 100 copies. They are available for \$100 (tax deductible) from the Serra Bicentennial Commission, 15151 San Fernando Mission Blvd., Mission Hills, California 91345.

The Pacific Center for Book Arts (PCBA) will have its Third Annual Book Auction on Thursday evening, April 11, 1985. It will be held in the Donohue Rare Book Room, Gleeson Library, University of San Francisco. There will be a Preview and a Silent Auction from 5 to 7 and the auction will be from 7 to 8:30. Further information may be obtained from D. Steven Corey at 666-6718 or Joanne Sonnichsen, the Chairman of the auction, at 326-7679.

We thought our members might enjoy in its entirety this notice which appeared in the April 1984 *Library Associates Newsletter*, California State University, Long Beach. The issue editor and author of the notice was John B. Ahouse. We congratulate them on completing their Book Club of California collection.

### *Boorkman Fund Completes Book Club Collection.*

*The idea was to combine the art of fine printing with the materials of California history and literature. Out of it emerged the organization called*

The Book Club of California, whose first publication in 1914 brought together two giants, Robert Ernest Cowan, the eminent bibliographer, and John Henry Nash, distinguished printer and typographer for the firm Taylor, Nash and Taylor. The resulting volume, *A Bibliography of the History of California and the Pacific West, 1510-1906*, is the cornerstone of any serious library of Californiana. The Book Club, meanwhile, in the years that followed has gone on to issue nearly 200 publications under its imprint that represent the best achievements of the book arts in this state.

With funds contributed last fall to the Charles Boorkman Memorial Fund, the Library has been able to purchase the one remaining volume needed to complete its collection of the books and keepsakes of The Book Club of California. The 1931 folio-sized volume, *The Santa Fe Trail to California, 1849-1852: The Journal and Drawings of H.M.T. Powell*, is the single most coveted title in the output of the Book Club to date, representing as it does an outstanding typographic achievement by the press of Edwin and Robert Grabhorn in San Francisco. H.M.T. Powell, one of the many thousands of settlers moving west by wagon train in the 1850's, is otherwise unknown to history except for his finely observed travel diary and his minutely detailed sketches of the sights and settlements encountered on the way to the Pacific coast, one of the earliest surviving visual records of this area. The Library's copy is one of only fifteen in which Powell's drawings are hand-colored to match the originals. It will be displayed in the Special Collections area for the remainder of the spring semester.

Purchase of the Powell volume achieves the goal set several years ago of completing the Book Club of California set in Special Collections. The foundation of this collection was originally acquired as part of the library of Philip K. Bekeart in 1968. Bekeart, a third-generation businessman in San Francisco and second-generation collector of Californiana, owned over half of the Book Club's editions at the time. The remaining volumes and those of the last fifteen years were gradually obtained from book dealers as they became available, and the Library now holds an institutional membership in the Club, assuring that future publications are received as issued.

Among the Book Club's titles, as might be expected, are numerous works devoted to missions, mining, and voyages of exploration. Also included are writings of California authors Robinson Jeffers, Bret Harte, and George Sterling, as well as such brief visitors as Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stevenson, and D. H. Lawrence. In addition, however, there are volumes of fine cartography, such as *California as an Island*, reproducing many of the 17th- and 18th-century maps that perpetuated that historic error, and *Designs on the Land*, containing facsimiles of



the early maps ("diseños") of California's many ranchos.

Four of the most elegant Book Club of California volumes are those in which the Grabhorn brothers devoted their printing skills to reproducing their own outstanding collection of traditional Japanese prints. Several other publications belong to the luxury category of "leaf books," in which an essay describing an example of historic fine printing is accompanied by a specimen leaf of the work under discussion. The Book Club has designed such books around the Coverdale English Bible of 1535, The Nuremberg Chronicle of 1493, a classic herbal of Dodoens from 1583, and Holinshed's Chronicles of 1587.

Printers and book designers whose work is reflected in the Book Club's publications include Ward Ritchie, the Allen Press, Lawton Kennedy, Mallette Dean, the Windsor Press, and Adrian Wilson. The books they, the Grabhorns, and John Henry Nash created for the Book Club are valued source material for the study of California history and culture, they are also satisfying and inspiring to see and use, and the now-completed collection taken as a whole is a testimonial to the healthy survival of fine book design in California.

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Preview and silent auction: 5:00 to 7:00

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CALIFORNIA WRITERS OF THE LAND



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